

Fact Sheet

Cultural Resources in Texas



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

RESPONSIBILITIES

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- The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assists private landowners with planning and applying conservation practices on their land.
- Cultural Resources are a physical part of our heritage that provide historic information, concepts and views of past lives.
- NRCS is mandated by law to ensure that federally assisted conservation activities will not adversely affect cultural resources.
- NRCS employees are trained in natural resources planning. Through the planning process, NRCS assists private landowners meet their conservation objectives, while also ensuring that cultural resources will not be adversely affected.

NRCS PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING CULTURAL RESOURCES ON PRIVATE LAND IN TEXAS

CONSIDERING CULTURAL RESOURCES DURING PLANNING:

- Potential impact to cultural resources will be considered during the planning process. Some practices involving ground disturbance may have an adverse affect on cultural resources. If during planning cultural resources are found to be present in the area of a prospective practice, and the practice(s) could adversely impact the cultural resource, NRCS will work with the landowner to:
 - ▶ Plan other practices which will not impact the cultural resource.
 - ▶ Avoid the cultural resource by moving the practice location.
- By considering cultural resources in the planning process and choosing practices that (1) do not impact cultural resources or (2) have been moved to avoid cultural resources, the objective of protecting cultural resources is met and there is no requirement to record or report the cultural resources.

FIELD CHECKS:

- Initial consideration of cultural resources during the planning process should result in practice choices and locations that will not impact cultural resources. However, NRCS must document formal field checks of cultural resources that could be adversely impacted by practices. These field checks are limited to the areas that could be impacted by such practices.
- There may be cases where alternate practices or locations are not available and cultural resources cannot be avoided. The landowner may:
 - ▶ Allow a cultural resource specialist to evaluate the cultural resources that may be affected.
 - ▶ Refuse further NRCS assistance.

RECORDING AND REPORTING FORMAL FIELD CHECKS:

- If the practice(s) requiring a formal field check are cost-shared, the area of the field check will be recorded in a dedicated soil survey or other suitable map and reported to the State Historic Preservation Officer.
- If the practice(s) requiring a formal field check are non cost-shared, NRCS will record, in the case file, that no cultural resources were adversely affected. No reporting is required.
- If the landowner refuses further NRCS assistance, there will be no record or report of the field check.

CONSTRUCTION DISCOVERY:

If cultural resources are encountered during construction, but prior to cultural resource disturbance, the landowner may refuse further NRCS assistance with no record or reporting of the cultural resource. If the landowner chooses to continue with the practice, a cultural resource specialist will be contacted to assist with evaluation of the resource.

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